

**City of Fort Lauderdale
Community Services Board
September 21, 2015 – 4:00 P.M.
City Commission Chambers – City Hall
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301**

October 2014-September 2015

MEMBERS		PRESENT	ABSENT
Wendy Gonsher, Chair	P	8	0
Jasmin Shirley, Vice Chair	P	8	0
Benjamin Bean	P	7	1
Mark Fillers	A	6	2
Wanda Francis	P	8	0
Gwendolyn Haynes	A	4	3
Jason King	A	5	3
Chris Lovell	A	7	1
Richard Morris	P	4	0
Fred Roccanti	A	6	2
Noah Szugajew	A	5	1
Joseph S. Van de Bogart	P	6	1

Staff Present

Mario DeSantis, Liaison and Housing Administrator
Marcia Gair, Administrative Aide
Jamie Opperee, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

Communication to City Commission

None.

I. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

- **Quorum Requirement – As of July 22, 2015, there are 13 appointed members to the Board, which means 7 constitutes a quorum**

Chair Gonsher called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m. and it was noted a quorum was not present.

II. WELCOME / BOARD AND STAFF INTRODUCTIONS

The Staff members present introduced themselves and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – AUGUST 10, 2015

As a quorum was not present, the August 10, 2015 minutes could not be approved.

IV. CDBG DISCUSSION

Mr. DeSantis reported that monitoring of Housing Opportunities for Persons with HIV/AIDS (HOPWA) agencies is almost complete. He noted that the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is moving toward a health care outcome model, which includes the understanding that stable housing leads to better health care outcomes. He anticipated that HOPWA performance indicators will be adjusted accordingly in the future. Contracts are being drafted and are expected to be provided to the HOPWA agencies by Friday, September 25, 2015.

He continued that once a metropolitan statistical area (MSA) reaches its case count threshold, they will no longer be considered to use State funds, but become their own entity, which means all funds must be redistributed. This means even if there are no funding cuts to the HOPWA program, a new MSA will require redistribution to each area, which results in less funding. Mr. DeSantis explained that this was new information he had not been aware of before. He estimated that the case count threshold is 1500.

The Board moved on to discuss the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. Chair Gonsher recalled that some members had wanted to revisit the application process, as well as scoring, priority issues, and a review of the support provided to applying agencies.

Chair Gonsher recalled that when she was first appointed to the Board, the application process was revised to make it more objective and more clearly define how the agencies were evaluated. Since that time, the scoring process has been modified further at the request of the City Commission. She also addressed some of the Board's internal rules, including scoring for the top agencies in each category and consideration of the City's needs. Chair Gonsher confirmed that they presently receive fewer applications than in previous years.

Mr. Morris addressed the evaluation criteria, suggesting that the scoring criteria lower the points available in the need category and shift these points to the agency status. He explained that he did not feel the agencies' needs could accurately be compared. Chair Gonsher did not agree, stating that the intent of the need category was to address the severity of an issue. Mr. Bean noted that if this change is made, it could have the unintended effect of penalizing long-standing and productive programs.

Chair Gonsher recalled that the City Commission had been uncomfortable with no longer providing funds to programs that have been funded for three years. Mr. Brown pointed out that agencies that have successfully applied for funds in the past may tend to view CDBG funds as an entitlement, while a smaller agency might not have had similar opportunities. He emphasized the need to include these smaller agencies without excluding those agencies that have been successful in the past.

Ms. Francis observed that she did not recall the Board declining to fund any agencies except those whose applications were not filled out correctly. Chair Gonsler noted that while it is possible to provide a lower amount of funding to multiple agencies, the use those agencies might make out of a lesser amount varies widely: for example, one agency might be able to use a smaller amount and continue to function, while another might need a certain amount funds to fill a counseling position and would not be helped by a smaller amount.

Ms. Francis asked if all agencies take advantage of the City's programs that offer them assistance in filling out applications. Mr. Brown advised that some agencies may find it difficult to articulate their goals and successes on the application, citing the example of an agency that was new to the CDBG process but had successfully applied to the City for funds in the past.

Chair Gonsler suggested that the Board could consider CDBG funds to be an innovation grant. Ms. Francis agreed that this could be an option, pointing out that there may be agencies and organizations assisting their communities in an innovative manner without the Board being aware of it. Chair Gonsler proposed taking points from the needs category and allocating these points toward innovation. Vice Chair Shirley added that points for an innovation category could also be taken from the agency information category. It was determined that this potential new category would be discussed further at the October 2015 meeting.

Mr. Brown noted that the current priority categories listed on the application are consistent with the priorities identified in the Annual Action Plan. He stated that the Board could continue with these categories, or they could recommend to the City Commission that categories be added or deleted. It was clarified that "eligible neighborhoods," as stated in the Grassroots category, refers to low-income areas already identified by census track. This means the City would not have to verify the income of the individuals being served by the program.

Mr. Bean referred to the decrease in applications in recent years, proposing that categories be eliminated in order to encourage more applicants. He explained that this could lead to more applications, as some agencies would no longer feel they had to compete directly with established, successful agencies or had to fit into a specific funding category. This would also provide the Board with more flexibility, even though they have fewer funds to allocate.

Mr. Brown observed that categories are not a requirement of the CDBG program; however, he cautioned that removing categories could also mean that newer or smaller agencies must now compete against large and previously successful entities that would not have typically shared their category. He suggested that agencies could be sorted into categories based upon their annual revenue.

Vice Chair Shirley requested clarification of whether or not the funding categories are consistent with the City's Strategic Plan. Mr. Brown replied that the categories are not part of the Strategic Plan, as they were determined before the City Manager was hired; however, the City's Annual Action Plan includes public service activities.

Chair Gonsher stated that while today's CDBG discussion has been productive, the lack of a quorum means the Board may not vote on the issue at this time.

The members thanked Chair Gonsher for her service to the Board, as her term will end next month.

V. GOOD OF THE ORDER

None.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

VII. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

None.

VIII. COMMUNICATIONS TO CITY COMMISSION

None.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 4:54 p.m.

Any written public comments made 48 hours prior to the meeting regarding items discussed during the proceedings have been attached hereto.

[Minutes prepared by K. McGuire, Prototype, Inc.]